

Traffic will shift onto new U.S. 13

Snags expected starting Thursday

By PRASHANT GOPAL
Staff reporter

Starting Thursday, northbound motorists on U.S. 13 near Townsend will be diverted onto a new stretch of highway so construction crews can start building the last 7.7 miles of Del. 1.

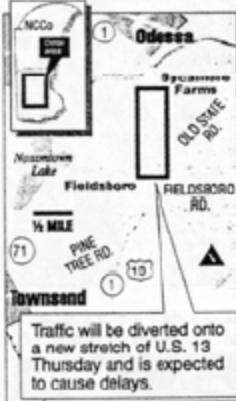
The realignment of U.S. 13 between Fieldsboro Road and the Sycamore Farms development will snag traffic on the major north-south road and create the need for local road detours, Delaware Department of Transportation officials said.

Northbound traffic Thursday will be switched from the old two-lane road to the new two-lane stretch of northbound U.S. 13, which is east of the existing lanes.

The old highway is to be torn up to make way for the last stretch of Del. 1 from just north of Smyrna to just south of Odessa, state Department of Transportation officials said. The limited-access highway's final stretch is scheduled to open in May 2003.

Major traffic delays are expected Thursday, when road crews close off one of two northbound lanes to complete paving work. Intermittent delays also are expected Friday.

Southbound traffic should not be affected because the existing two lanes will remain open throughout the northbound work.



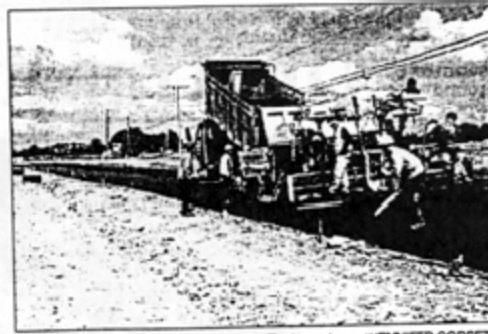
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Northbound motorists Thursday should use alternate routes, such as Del. 9 and Del. 71, or plan for long delays.

"We're going to be working here and it's not going to be a happy day unless people find alternate routes," DelDOT project manager David Duke said.

Fieldsboro Road, Noxontown Road and Sycamore Farms residents will find their access to U.S. 13 limited until spring 2002, Duke said. Residents will have to take detours of up to half a mile to make some turns onto U.S. 13, Duke said.

Those who normally use Fieldsboro and Noxontown roads no longer will be able to make left turns onto U.S. 13.



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Road crews pave the new section of U.S. 13 north, where traffic soon will be diverted during work on Del. 1.

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Northbound traffic on the old U.S. 13 passes by the new road, being built to divert traffic to permit further construction on Del. 1.

Instead, Fieldsboro Road travelers will have to drive to Old State Road to turn south. Noxontown Road residents who want to go north would need to travel about one-eighth mile south on U.S. 13 and then make a U-turn, state officials said.

Motorists heading south on U.S. 13 no longer will be able to turn left into Sycamore Farms. They will have to make a U-turn at Old State Road. State officials said they expect traffic to increase at Old State Road because of the change.

U.S. 13 carries about 40,000 cars in both directions each day.

Rep. Richard C. Cathcart, R-Middletown, said he is concerned the project will inconvenience residents of Sycamore

Farms and create safety problems at Old State Road.

"From my perspective, it's going to create an unsafe condition because you'll have a bunch of people doing U-turns to go in the opposite direction," Cathcart said. "Old State Road is bad enough as it is."

Sycamore Farms residents won't need to make a U-turn if they use the back entrance from Old State Road, Duke said.

And Fieldsboro Road residents heading south would have to cross the median even if left turns onto U.S. 13 were allowed, Duke said.

"It's still the same movement," Duke said. "It's just at a different location."

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